

DATA STORAGE SERVICE FOR USERS OF DATA COMMUNICATION NETWORKS

Abstract of the Disclosure

5 The presently contemplated file transfer service, for users of data
communication networks like the Internet, operates as agent of respective subscribing
clients to retrieve and store data files that clients are unable to instantly download to
workstations currently used by them. Files stored by the transfer service are made
available to respective clients when the latter are able to receive them. In one
application of this, a client is unable to instantly download a large file because the
computer workstation the client is then using operates at a low speed unsuited for that
purpose. In other applications, the client is unable to download a file because the
10 client's workstation is behind a firewall that effectively blocks that action. In these
applications, the transfer service is useful to effectively either circumvent restrictions of
the firewall, or to deliver the file to the client at a workstation that is not behind the
firewall. The contemplated service retrieves and stores data files at source locations
designated by client workstations, and confirms completion of these operations to the
client (e.g. via an e-mail message). When the client is at a workstation able to receive
15 files stored by the service, the client connects to the service and requests transmittal of
respective files. Upon authenticating the client's identity and subscription, the transfer
service makes the file accessible to the requesting client. A group of clients may use a
single subscription to effectively allow any member of the group to initiate a file retrieval
and storage operation and/or to request access to a previously retrieved and stored
20 file.